

# **Student Government Day Handbook**



**Massachusetts State House**

**April 13, 2012**

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# Welcome!

Congratulations on your election to participate in the 65<sup>th</sup> annual Student Government Day, which will be held on Friday, April 13, 2012, at the State House in Boston from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Student Government Day is an opportunity for you and fellow students from across the Commonwealth to experience “the process of government” by taking part in simulated activities in which you serve in the role of a government official. Students are assigned to the roles of state senator, state representative, constitutional officer, or Supreme Court justice. To find out which role you have been assigned, please see the Student Government Day website ([http://www.doe.mass.edu/famcomm/student/sgd\\_program.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/famcomm/student/sgd_program.html)). Note that students who registered late may not appear on the list. They will be observers in the Executive Branch, where they will have an opportunity to meet with some of the Constitutional Officers.

To help you prepare for the day, please study the information in this handbook, which provides background information on the workings of Massachusetts government and on the legislative process. Also, please review the information on the Student Government website ([http://www.doe.mass.edu/famcomm/student/sgd\\_program.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/famcomm/student/sgd_program.html)) to learn about the bills that will form the centerpiece of the day’s activities. You are encouraged to conduct your own research on the issues raised by these bills to inform any remarks you may want to make about them.

Although you have been assigned to a role filled by an elected or appointed official, bear in mind that you will be participating in Student Government Day as yourself and not as the elected official whose role you will be playing for the day. Wherever possible, students assigned the role of state senator or state representative have been assigned to the district in which they reside.

Students assigned the roles of constitutional officers or Supreme Court justices will experience the day a bit differently than those assigned to the legislature. These students will receive a brief orientation before the day’s activities begin, followed by meeting with the elected constitutional officers or Supreme Court justices. Even though their roles are a bit different, these students are still expected to be well informed about the functions of state government and about the bills to be discussed.

Please keep in mind that proper respect for one’s colleagues and for our institutions is an important part of the culture of government. **Please note that appropriate dress for the day consists of business attire, including proper footwear.** Appropriate men’s attire includes a collared shirt and tie. Sport coats and/or suits with dress shoes are preferred for both men and women. Attire such as jeans, T shirts, sneakers, sandals, and flip flops are not considered appropriate.

Please bring a school-issued or government-issued ID with you to the State House. All other materials will be provided in the packets you will receive at registration. Please also note that for security reasons, backpacks are not allowed in the State House. Students are also discouraged from bringing large purses or bags, because these must be searched, which may delay your registration. Also note that students are not permitted to bring any type of campaign materials to the event. Everyone will be screened through a metal detector before being admitted.

**Please plan to arrive between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m.** A large number of students will need to check in a very short time period, so you need to allow time to go through security and registration. Please account for the heavy morning commute, and begin your trip to Boston early to ensure your timely arrival. The Student Government Day **activities will begin promptly at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at 1:00 p.m.**

You can use either of the two public entrances to the State House:

(1) The **General Hooker Entrance** is on Beacon Street near the corner of Bowdoin Street. Look for the statue of General Joseph Hooker on his horse to the right of the center gate. If you are coming up Park Street from the T (subway) station, the entrance will be directly across Beacon Street.

(2) The **Ashburton Park Entrance** is on Bowdoin Street. Look for a white column with an eagle on top. This entrance offers handicap accessibility; for more information on handicap accessibility, please call (617) 727-3676.

For more information about Student Government Day, please refer to the Student Government website ([http://www.doe.mass.edu/famcomm/student/sgd\\_program.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/famcomm/student/sgd_program.html)). If you have any questions that are not answered on the website, please contact Susan Hargrave, Student Government Day Coordinator, at [shargrave@doe.mass.edu](mailto:shargrave@doe.mass.edu) or (781) 338-6844.

# **Massachusetts Student Government Day Mission**

Observed in accordance with Chapter 6, Section 12M of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and conducted under the direction of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Student Government Day represents one of the nation's most interesting student activities in state government.

This law made it possible for every public and nonpublic high school in the state to democratically elect students who for one day assume the roles of constitutional officers, court justices, and members of the General Court.

## **Massachusetts General Law Chapter 6, Section 12M**

The law establishing Student Government Day reads as follows:

(<http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter6/Section12M>)

Section 12M. The governor shall annually set apart the first Friday in April or, with the approval of the commissioner of education, any other Friday, as Student Government Day, and shall by proclamation recommend that exercises appropriate to such day be observed in the schools of the commonwealth.

The governor, lieutenant governor, state secretary, state treasurer, state auditor, attorney general and each head of a state department may select a high school senior and may permit each such student to occupy the chair and office of the appointing officer during Student Government Day in order to observe the processes of government in the executive and administrative departments of the commonwealth. Each such student may be designated as student governor, or otherwise, according to the office occupied by him.

There shall be a student senate of forty members and a student house of representatives of two hundred and forty members elected by high school pupils from districts corresponding as nearly as possible to the senatorial and representative districts, which districts shall be set up by the commissioner of education, who shall, not later than the third Wednesday of January, notify the principals of all the high schools in the commonwealth. Such elections shall be conducted under the supervision of the principals of the high schools in the several districts and in so far as possible shall be conducted as are elections for members of the general court. One alternate for each student senator and representative may be elected. Said students may assemble in Boston on the designated Friday and may use the chamber of the senate and of the house of representatives for the purpose of the meeting, may elect officers, appoint committees, introduce bills, conduct hearings, receive committee reports, debate such reports and vote on the acceptance or rejection of the same, and in general conduct its proceedings in the same manner as the general court.

No part of the expense incurred in carrying out the provisions of this section shall be borne by the commonwealth and no board, commission or department of the commonwealth shall receive or expend any funds for such purposes; provided, that the commissioner of education may request additional clerical assistance, if required, from the director of personnel. Subject to the provisions of this paragraph any person or civic, charitable or non-political organization may make contributions for such purpose.

# Politics in Massachusetts

## Government

The Massachusetts [Constitution](#) was ratified in 1780 while the Revolutionary War was still in progress, nine years before the United States Constitution was adopted. It is the oldest written Constitution now in use in the world. It specified [three branches](#) of Government: Executive, Legislative, and Judicial.

## Executive Branch

The [Governor](#) is head of the executive branch and serves as chief administrative officer of the state and as commander-in-chief of the Massachusetts' military forces. His or her responsibilities include preparation of the annual budget, nomination of all judicial officers, the granting of pardons (with the approval of the governor's Council), appointments of the heads of most major state departments, and the acceptance or veto of each bill passed by the Legislature. Several Executive Offices have also been established, each headed by a Secretary appointed by the Governor, much like the president's Cabinet.

The Governor may recommend new policies for Massachusetts, new legislation, and changes in the administration of departments that conduct the government from day to day. He or she has the power to order out the National Guard to meet domestic emergencies, and is Massachusetts's chief spokesman with the federal government.

The [Lieutenant Governor](#) serves as Acting Governor in the absence, death, or removal of the Governor. He or she is by law a voting member of the Executive Council, except when presiding over it in the absence of the Governor.

## Executive Council

The [Governor's Council](#) (also called the Executive Council) is composed of the Lieutenant Governor and eight councillors elected from councillor districts for a two-year term. It has the constitutional power to approve judicial appointments and pardons, to authorize expenditures from the Treasury, to approve the appointment of constitutional officers if a vacancy occurs when the Legislature is not in session, and to compile and certify the results of statewide elections. It also approves the appointments of notaries public and justices of the peace.

## Other Constitutional Officers

The four other Constitutional Officers of Massachusetts are elected for four-year terms. They are listed in order of their succession to the Office of the Governor.

The [Secretary of the Commonwealth](#), Keeper of the Great Seal and custodian of the records of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, has many responsibilities which include: the administration of elections, maintenance of public records, filing and distribution of public documents, corporate registration, recordings of appointments and commissions, the storage of historical data, the preservation of historic sites, the administration and enforcement of the Massachusetts Uniform Securities Act, and information and referral on all aspects of state government.

The [Attorney General](#) is the chief legal officer of Massachusetts and its chief law-enforcing agent. He or she advises and represents the government of the Commonwealth, rendering opinions upon the request



of its officials and serving as its lawyer in all court proceedings. The Attorney General also consults with and advises the state's 11 district attorneys. Through his or her efforts in the areas of consumer and environmental protection, the office provides a voice for the average citizen.

The [Treasurer](#) and Receiver-General is the custodian of all Massachusetts funds and is the only party authorized to make payment of those funds. Every state agency must deposit receipts and revenues which it has received with the Treasurer. The Treasurer is responsible for the issuance of state bonds and for the investment policy of the state. The State Board of Retirement and State Lottery Commission are under his or her jurisdiction.

The [Auditor](#) of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is in charge of auditing the accounts of all state entities and related activities at least once every two years. Based on legal guidelines, the auditor's Division of Local Mandates also determines whether the state or a municipality is responsible for a specific state-mandated service or program.

All of the Constitutional Officers serve on and work with State boards and commissions.

## **Legislative Branch**

"The [Great and General Court](#)," elected every two years, is made up of a Senate of 40 members and a House of Representatives of 160 members. Each branch elects its own leader from its membership. The Senate elects its President; the House its Speaker. These officers exercise power through their appointments of majority floor leaders and whips (the minority party elects its leaders in a party caucus), their selection of chairs and all members of the joint committees, and in their rulings as presiding officers. Joint [committees](#) of the General Court are made up of six senators and 11 representatives, with a Senate and House Chair for each committee. These committees must hold hearings on all bills filed. Their report usually determines whether or not a bill will pass. Each chamber has a separate Rules and a Ways and Means Committee and these are among the most important committee assignments.

## **Judicial Branch**

Judicial appointments are held to the age of seventy. The [Supreme Judicial Court](#), consisting of a Chief Justice and six Associate Justices, is the highest court in the Commonwealth; it is empowered to advise the Governor and the Legislature on questions of law. All trials are held in departments and divisions of a unified Trial Court, headed by a Chief Administrative Justice assisted by an Administrator of Courts. It hears civil and criminal cases. Cases may be appealed to the Supreme Judicial Court or the Appeals Court for review of law, but findings of fact made by the Trial Court are final. The Superior Court, consisting of a Chief Justice and 66 Associate Justices, is the highest department of the Trial Court. Other departments are the District, Housing, Juvenile, Land, and Probate Courts.

Suffolk University Law School, in cooperation with the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, maintains a [website](#) in order to make oral arguments before the Supreme Judicial Court accessible to the general public and the legal community. Webcasts of Supreme Judicial Court oral arguments at the John Adams Courthouse are available live while the cases are being argued and may also be viewed at a later time through the Suffolk Law School's archives.

## Counties

Massachusetts is made up of 14 counties, which are: Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden, Worcester, Middlesex, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Bristol, Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket. Traditionally, each has been served by three County Commissioners with the exception of Nantucket and Suffolk. The five town selectmen of Nantucket serve as Commissioners; Suffolk's Commissioners are the Mayor and City Council of Boston. In 1985, the state Legislature passed laws allowing counties, under certain circumstances, to adopt "home rule" charters which would change the form, structure, and organization of county government. In 1988, six counties placed home rule questions on their ballots, and Barnstable and Hampshire county voters voted for the question. Therefore, Barnstable County is now governed by an elected 15 member Assembly of Delegates and an 11 member Board of County Commissioners. An elected Board of County Commissioners, assisted by an appointed County Administrator, governs Hampshire County. The county level of government is not mentioned in the state Constitution and has been established by legislative action.

## Municipalities

The cities of Massachusetts are governed by Mayors and City Councils, but towns are usually governed by groups of officials called Selectmen. A Board of Selectmen is usually elected for a one-or-two-year term, and town meetings, a tradition from Colonial times, are still held regularly.

## Voting Requirements

### Who may register to vote?

In order to vote, a person must be:

- a US citizen, and
- a resident of Massachusetts, and
- 18 years old on or before election day

### How do you register to vote?

There are several ways you can register:

- **Through the mail**, by completing a mail-in registration form and delivering it to your city or town election office. To obtain a mail-in registration form, you can [download](#) it or call 617-727-2828 or 1-800-462-VOTE to have the form sent to you. Mail the completed form to your local city or town hall. You should receive a confirmation notice in 2 to 3 weeks. If you do not, please contact your local election office to verify your voting status.
- **In person** at any local election office in any city or town in the state and at any registration event you encounter anywhere in Massachusetts.
- **At the Registry of Motor Vehicles** when applying for or renewing your driver's license at the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Be sure to keep your motor voter receipt until you receive confirmation from your local election official. If you do not receive any confirmation, please contact your local election office to verify your voting status.



# The Lawmaking Process in Massachusetts

The following is a brief account of the lawmaking process in Massachusetts. The procedures described do not include every exception to the rule or possible action that may be taken on a bill.

1. Any citizen may file a petition in the Massachusetts Legislature. This is referred to as the “Right of Free Petition.” To be admitted for consideration, the petition must be sponsored by a member of the House or Senate and filed with the House or Senate Clerk by the first Wednesday in January in even numbered years and by the first Wednesday in November in odd numbered years.
2. Petitions filed within the time limit are assigned a House or Senate number and referred to one of the 26 Joint Standing Committees.
3. Public hearings are held on all matters referred to the committees. Dates of the hearings are published on the General Court website.
4. Anyone may appear at a hearing and may address the committee by testifying either as a proponent or opponent of specific bills. He/she may also send in written testimony in support of or in opposition to the legislation. The chairperson may limit time for the hearing or time for testimony on any bill.
5. Following a public hearing, during an executive session, the committee decides how to report the bill. In its report, the committee may recommend that a piece of legislation "Ought to Pass," "Ought Not to Pass," "Ought to Pass with an Amendment" or be "Changed," "Discharged to Another Committee" or "Referred to a Study Order."
6. The Committees on Ways and Means in the House and Senate must approve a bill if the measure involves the expenditure of, or impacts state funds. Upon a favorable report, the bill is referred to the House Committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling or, in the Senate, to the Committee on Steering and Policy.
7. With an adverse report "Ought Not to Pass", the bill is reported in the branch in which it originated. The committee report is either accepted, killing the legislation, or overturned.
8. A bill, which is either favorably "Ought to Pass or Ought to Pass with Amendment" reported or overturned, must have three "readings" on three separate days. When a committee reports a bill or resolve favorably, it is read, and this is its "first reading." Also, when an adverse report is overturned, or a matter is received from the other legislative branch for the first time, it is read, and this is the "first reading."
9. After the "first reading" in the Senate, the bill is referred to the Committee on Steering & Policy, a scheduling committee that is required to report a matter onto the floor of the Senate within 30 days after receiving it. Once the bill is reported by the Committee on Steering & Policy, it is placed in the "notice section" of the Senate Calendar for initial review by the members. In the House, a bill is generally referred to the House Committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling before it is sent to the floor for action.
10. After a matter has appeared in the "notice section," it is placed in the following Calendar for a "second reading." The "second reading" occurs when a measure appears on the Calendar for the first time. The question before the full branch at this stage is on whether the bill shall be ordered to a "third reading." It

then may be debated, amended, or killed. If favorably acted upon, it is referred to the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading.

11. The Committee on Bills in the Third Reading is required to examine and correct the bills that are referred to it for the purpose of avoiding repetitions and unconstitutional provisions. This committee ensures accuracy in the text of the bill and consistency of the language with existing statutes. The “third reading” of the bill is accompanied by debate and involves the same possible alternative actions as the “second reading.” A vote will then be taken on passing the bill to be “engrossed.”
12. After a bill has passed to be “engrossed” in one branch, it is sent to the other branch and the bill takes its “readings” in the same manner as in the first branch.
13. After the bill has passed to be “engrossed” by both branches, it is sent to the Legislative Engrossing Division. “Enactment” comes after “engrossment.” The question does not appear in the Orders of the Day and is usually only a formality. After a bill has been “enacted” in the House, it is then sent to the Senate for equivalent action. After “enactment” in the Senate, the bill is presented to the Governor for his or her signature.
14. The Governor has ten days in which to act on the bills before him/her, and he/she either signs the bill into law, returns it to the branch where it originated with recommendations for amendment, or vetoes it. If the Governor takes no action in the ten-day period and the legislature is still in session, the bill becomes law without his/her signature. If the legislature “prorogues” during this period and the Governor does not sign the measure, then it does not become law. This is called a “pocket veto.” The legislature may override the Governor's veto by a two-thirds vote of both branches. Without an “emergency preamble,” most laws become effective 90 days after the Governor signs them.
15. To learn more about lawmaking process or state government in general, you can refer to the information on the [state's website](#).

## Joint Sessions of the House and Senate

There are occasions in which both the House and Senate will meet in a “Joint Convention.” When in joint session, the Joint Rules of the House and Senate govern the conduct of business.

*The President of the Senate shall preside in Conventions of the two branches, and such conventions shall be held in the Representatives’ Chamber; the Senate Clerk and Parliamentarian shall be the Clerk of the Convention . . .*<sup>1</sup>

### Joint Conventions can be called:

*When an agreement has been made by the two branches to go into Convention, such agreement shall not be altered or annulled, except by concurrent vote, excepting that it shall be in order to recess the Convention from time to time upon a majority vote of said Convention.*<sup>2</sup>

Joint Conventions are usually called to consider amendments to the State Constitution. These amendments can be petitioned for either by the people of the Commonwealth or by members of the General Court.

In either case, according to the Massachusetts Constitution Article XLVII, Part IV, Section 2. *Joint Session:*

*If a proposal for a specific amendment of the constitution is introduced into the general court by initiative petition signed by not less than twenty-five thousand qualified voters, or if in case of a proposal for amendment introduced into the general court by a member of either house, consideration thereof in joint session is called for by vote of either house, such proposal shall, not later than the second Wednesday in June, be laid before a joint session of the two houses, at which the president of the senate shall preside; and if the two houses fail to agree upon a time for holding any joint session hereby required, or fail to continue the same from time to time until final action has been taken upon all amendments pending, the governor shall call such joint session or continuance thereof.*

*[Section 2 superseded by section 1 of Amendments, Art. LXXXI.]*<sup>3</sup>

In the case where a constitutional amendment is being considered the Joint Convention is usually termed a “Constitutional Convention.” However, as detailed in Joint Rule 25, the General Court may enter into a joint session at any time, for any issue, when the two branches concur on a joint meeting. One example of a joint meeting is the Governor’s “State of the State Address” in which the membership of the House and the Senate assemble in the House Chamber to hear the remarks of the Governor.

Constitution of Massachusetts, Article XLVII, Part IV, Section 2

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<sup>1</sup> Rule 24, Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives

<sup>2</sup> Rule 25, Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives

<sup>3</sup> Constitution of Massachusetts, Article XLVII, Part IV, Section 2

# **Special Rules of the HOUSE for Student Government Day**

## **Rules of debate**

1. Every member, when he/she speaks, shall stand in his/her place and address the Student Speaker. When recognized, the member shall confine himself/herself to the measure and question under debate and shall at all times avoid personalities.
2. When two or more members rise to speak at the same time, the Speaker shall designate the member who is entitled to the floor.
3. No member shall speak more than once to the prevention of any other member who has not spoken and desires to speak on the same question.
4. No member shall interrupt another while speaking, except by rising to call to order or to rise to a question of personal privilege or parliamentary inquiry.
5. After a question is put to vote no member shall speak to it.

## **Amending a bill**

6. All amendments shall be filed with the Student Clerk. Amendments will be taken up in an order, the order in which they are filed, unless a new order is determined by the Student Speaker and the Student Clerk in consultation with the sponsor(s).
7. Amendments in the second-degree (amending an amendment) will be ruled out of order.
8. When an amendment is proposed, debate will take place on the amendment first and then return to the debate on the larger bill.

## **Voting**

9. All votes shall be taken by a voice vote, except as provided in Rule 10.
10. All matters shall be considered third reading matters. A call of the yeas and nays shall be taken only at the engrossment stage. The yeas and nays shall be called on a motion of a member and when supported by 16 members of the House.

# **Special Rules of the SENATE for Student Government Day**

## **Rules of debate**

1. Every member, when he/she speaks, shall stand in his/her place and address the Student President. When recognized, the member shall confine himself/herself to the measure and question under debate and shall at all times avoid personalities.
2. When two or more members rise to speak at the same time, the Student President shall designate the member who is entitled to the floor.
3. No member shall speak more than once to the prevention of any other member who has not spoken and desires to speak on the same question.
4. No member shall interrupt another while speaking, except by rising to call to order or to rise to a question of personal privilege or parliamentary inquiry.
5. After a question is put to vote no member shall speak to it.

## **Amending a bill**

6. All amendments shall be filed with the Student Clerk. Amendments will be taken up in an order, the order in which they are filed, unless a new order is determined by the Student President and the Student Clerk in consultation with the sponsor(s).
7. Amendments in the second-degree (amending an amendment) will be ruled out of order.
8. When an amendment is proposed, debate will take place on the amendment first and then return to the debate on the larger bill.

## **Voting**

9. All votes shall be taken by a voice vote, except as provided in Rule 10.
10. All matters shall be considered third reading matters. A call of the yeas and nays shall be taken only at the engrossment stage. The yeas and nays shall be called on a motion of a member and when supported by six members of the Senate.

# Glossary of Terms

**ACT:** A bill passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor (or passed over his/her veto), thus becoming law.

**ACTS AND RESOLVES:** A compilation of the bills and resolves enacted and passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. The Acts and Resolves are bound in a volume on a yearly basis.

**AD HOC COMMITTEE:** A committee formed for some special purpose. The committee automatically dissolves upon the completion of the specified task.

**ADJOURN:** To end daily session.

**ADOPTION:** The question on matters relating directly to the legislative body requiring only one vote; for example, orders, resolutions, amendments and motions.

**ADVERSE REPORT:** A committee recommendation that a matter "ought not to pass."

**AMENDMENT:** An addition, correction or deletion formally modifying a measure offered by a member or a committee and voted on by the body.

**APPEAL THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR:** A parliamentary procedure for a legislator to challenge the decision of the presiding officer.

**APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR:** The signature of the Governor on an engrossed and enacted bill. The bill becomes law in 90 days unless there is an Emergency Preamble.

**BILL:** Accompanies petition and usually asks for something of a permanent nature.

**BY REQUEST:** A bill or resolve, filed at the request of a citizen, which does not have the endorsement of the legislator.

**CALENDAR:** See Orders of the Day.

**CAUCUS:** Meeting of Legislators of the same political party to decide policy and course of action.

**CHAMBERS:** The two meeting places of the House and Senate where the formal business of the day is conducted. Chamber galleries are open to the public.

**CHAPTER NUMBER:** Number assigned to a law once it has been signed by the Governor.

**COMMITTEE:** Consists of members of the House and Senate (Joint Committees) or House or Senate only (Standing Committees).

**COMMITTEE ON BILLS IN THE THIRD READING:** Committee empowered to examine and correct bills and resolves to avoid repetitions and unconstitutional provisions and to ensure accuracy and consistency with existing statutes. Matters are automatically referred to this committee when ordered to a "third reading."

**CONCURRENCE:** Agreement by one branch with an action originating in the other branch.



**CONFERENCE COMMITTEE:** A committee composed of three members of each branch for the purpose of resolving differences between House and Senate versions of the same bill. The report of a conference committee must be voted up or down by each branch and may not be amended.

**CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION:** Meeting of the Senate and House of Representatives in the House Chamber to consider and vote on proposed constitutional amendments. The procedure is governed by special rules adopted by both branches.

**DAILY LIST:** List of committee hearings giving the committee, its matters and the time and room number of each hearing.

**DEBATE:** Formal discussion on a matter before the body.

**DOCKET BOOK:** A book located in the Clerk's Office, which lists all the legislation filed in any one legislative session.

**EMERGENCY PREAMBLE:** A preamble to a bill setting forth the facts constituting an emergency, and the statement that the law is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety or convenience. Matters with emergency preambles become law immediately upon approval by the Governor. Either the Governor or the legislature may attach a preamble.

**ENACTMENT:** Final passage of a bill by the House or Senate.

**ENGROSSED BILLS OR RESOLVES:** Bills and resolves which are before the House and the Senate for final action, after having been certified by the Clerk to be rightly and truly prepared for final passage.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** A meeting of committee members held after a hearing to review public testimony and discuss the merits of the bill before making recommendations to the full membership of the House or Senate. Open to the public.

**FAVORABLE REPORT:** A committee recommendation that a matter "ought to pass." A matter takes its first reading at this time.

**FILIBUSTER:** A deliberate obstruction of the legislative process by making a long speech.

**FORMAL SESSION:** Meeting to consider and act upon reports of committees, messages from the Governor, petitions, orders, enactments, papers from the other branch, matters in the Orders of the Day and various other matters which may be *controversial* in nature and during which roll call votes may be taken.

**GENERAL COURT:** Name originally used to designate the Massachusetts State Legislature. It is still in use. The Legislature is also known as the Great and General Court.

**GENERAL LAWS:** Permanent in nature and applicable to the entire Commonwealth or the state government.

**GERMANENESS:** The relevance or appropriateness of amendments or debate to the subject matter under discussion.

**GRANDFATHER CLAUSE:** A provision in a bill, which exempts persons presently practicing or involved in a legislatively restricted activity from the provisions of the statute.

**HEARING:** A formal meeting of a committee at which testimony is presented.

**HOME RULE PETITION:** Legislation filed to address the needs of a particular municipality or at the request of, and with the approval of, that municipality and which does not affect generally the laws of Massachusetts.

**INFORMAL SESSION:** Meeting designated by the Speaker of the House and the Senate President to consider reports of committees, papers from the other branch, amendments, matters in the Orders of the Day and various other matters which are of a *non-controversial* nature – there is no debate nor roll call votes. Any session may be declared an informal session with prior notice given, or in cases of an emergency.

**INITIATIVE PETITION:** Request by a specified number of voters to submit a constitutional amendment or law to the people for approval or rejection. The petition is introduced into the General Court if signed by a number of citizens equaling three percent of the entire vote for Governor in the preceding gubernatorial election. If a proposed initiative law fails to pass the General Court, additional signatures are required to place it on the ballot. A proposed initiative constitutional amendment, approved by at least one-fourth of the General Court, sitting in joint sessions by two consecutively elected General Courts, can be placed on the ballot.

**INTERIM:** The period from adjournment of one regular legislative session to the commencement of the next legislative session.

**JOINT COMMITTEE:** A joint committee is composed of members of both branches of the Legislature. Once a bill is recommended for passage by a joint committee and passes the house where it originated, it may immediately be placed on the Calendar in the other branch.

**JOINT RULES:** Rules for the governing of the two bodies adopted by both branches.

**JOINT RULE 10:** Rule ordering that all matters referred to joint committees be reported out of the committees by the third Wednesday in March of the second annual session. If a matter is referred to a committee on or after the third Wednesday in February of the second annual session, it must be reported out within 30 days.

**JOINT RULE 33:** Rule allowing the alteration, suspension or rescission of Joint Rules by a concurrent two-thirds vote of members present and voting. Some rules are suspended only by a four-fifths vote and a very few by unanimous consent.

**JOURNAL:** The official record maintained in each legislative branch in which the day's proceedings are recorded.

**LATE FILE:** A bill or resolve filed after the filing deadline.

**LAY ON THE TABLE:** Motion to lay aside consideration of any bill, resolve, report, amendment or motion. If laid on the table, consideration is postponed until a subsequent motion taking the item off the table succeeds. A motion to lay on the table may only be made in the Senate.

**LEADERSHIP:** The President, Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the Senate and their assistants, and the Speaker, Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the House and their assistants.

**LEGISLATIVE RECORD:** Numerical listing of all numbered matters filed for consideration by the General Court. Includes a brief description of the matter and its full legislative history.

**NO OBJECTION:** Without objection by any member, the Senate or House may proceed to business as under suspension of rules, etc. Also known as unanimous consent.

**ORDER:** Formal motion in writing, not requiring the Governor's signature, which is temporary in nature and is used to establish investigative committees, to change rules and other parliamentary actions.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY:** Calendar of matters to be considered by the Senate or the House of Representatives.

**OVERRIDE:** To overturn the Governor's veto by a two-thirds vote of the members present in both the House and the Senate.

**PAIRING OF VOTES:** Procedure allowed in the Senate only, whereby a member, before the vote is taken, announces to the Senate that he or she has paired his or her vote with an opposing vote of an absent member. The two votes do not affect the outcome of the final tally.

**PASS:** A Legislator desiring to debate a particular item on the Calendar calls out "Pass" when the item is read by the Clerk. After disposing of all non-controversial items, the "Passed" items are taken up by the legislative body.

**PASSING BILL TO BE ENACTED:** The engrossed bill (or resolve) is read by title by the President or Speaker prior to his/her endorsement. The bill then is transmitted to the Governor by the Clerk of the Senate.

**PASSING BILL TO BE ENGROSSED:** Final action by House and Senate prior to enactment.

**PETITION:** Vehicle used for filing of various types of matters for consideration by the General Court, i.e., bills, resolves, etc.

**POCKET VETO:** A veto resulting from the Governor's failure to sign a bill following prorogation. Because the session has ended, the bill will not automatically become law after ten days and the General Court has no opportunity to override the veto.

**POINT OF ORDER:** Challenge to breach of order or rule.

**PROPOSAL:** Document accompanying a petition introducing legislative amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth.

**PROROGATION:** Termination of a legislative year by agreement between the Governor and both legislative bodies.

**QUESTION OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE:** Questions affecting the rights, reputations and conduct of members.

**QUORUM:** The number of members required for the conduct of business: 21 in the Senate and 81 in the House.

**RECESS:** Temporary delay in proceedings that can be of varying lengths of time (minutes, hours, days and weeks).

**RECOMMITTED:** Sending a bill back to the committee that reported it out for consideration.

**RECONSIDERATION:** Any member may move to reconsider a vote on any matter. If reconsideration prevails, the matter is voted on again.

**REDRAFT:** New version of a bill which shows substantial changes. Redrafts often have different bill numbers from the original bill.

**REFERENDUM PETITION:** A petition signed by a specified number of voters to repeal a law enacted by the Legislature and requesting that the legislation be suspended until the vote is taken.

**REFILE:** A petition similar to one that was presented to the General Court in a previous session.

**REPORTING DATE:** The date on which all bills must be reported out of joint committees. This rule may be suspended to extend the reporting date.

**REPORT OF A COMMITTEE:** Recommendation of the committee to which a matter has been referred.

**RESOLUTION:** Documents, which may or may not accompany a petition, expressing an opinion of the sentiments of one or both branches of the General Court. It is used for congratulations, for memorializing Congress regarding public questions, etc. Resolutions do not require the Governor's signature.

**RESOLVE:** Accompanies a petition and is of a more temporary or immediate nature, such as setting up investigative commissions, payment of claims, etc.

**RIGHT OF FREE PETITION:** The right of every citizen of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to petition the General Court for legislation on any subject.

**ROLL CALL:** A member-by-member polling on a pending question. In the House, 20 members may request a roll call. In the Senate, one-fifth of the members present or *a number equal to the total number of minority party members* may request a roll call. The Senate roll calls are conducted orally and the House roll calls are done electronically.

**SECOND READING OF A BILL:** The title of each bill or resolve is read by the Clerk prior to debate and action thereon.

**SESSION:** The period during which the legislature meets and carries out its business.

**SPECIAL LAW:** Legislative act applying to a particular county, city, town or district, individual or group of individuals and not general in nature.

**STANDING COMMITTEES:** Nine permanent committees in the Senate and 11 in the House, which serve their respective legislative bodies separately.

**STUDY ORDER:** Means by which bills are sent back to the joint committees for further investigation and study.

**SUBSTITUTION:** Procedure by which an adverse report of a committee is overturned. Technically, the bill is substituted for the adverse report, reviving the legislation.

**SUSPENSION OF RULES:** In order to expedite business of the House and Senate, rules are sometimes suspended, usually without objection. Most rules require a two-thirds vote to suspend; a few, four-fifths; and a very few, unanimous consent.

**THIRD READING:** After a bill is released by the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading, it is read for a third and final time in the chamber where it may again be debated and amended.

**UNANIMOUS CONSENT:** This occurs when no member objects to suspension of the rules so that an action may take place, which is otherwise prohibited.

**VETO:** The action of the Governor in disapproving a measure. It includes a statement of the reasons why the Governor has not approved the measure and is sent to the chamber from which the bill originated.

**VOICE VOTE:** Oral expression of the members when a question is submitted for their determination. Response is given by "ayes" and "nays" and the presiding officer states his/her decision as to which side prevails.

**YIELD:** To relinquish the floor to allow another member to speak or ask a question. Only allowed in the House of Representatives.